



**Conservation Rankings**  
The conservation ranking process was used to evaluate and highlight the relative value of ecosystems in the Okanagan Region as part of two independent projects (North & Central Okanagan regional districts, and South Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District). Data sources included Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping (TEM), Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory (SEI), and Vegetation Resource Inventory (VRI), and other biophysical criteria (e.g., elevation and aspect). Numerical scores were assigned to ecosystems, then classified into one of four relative conservation ranks: low, moderate, high, or very high in importance to conservation.

**Applying Conservation Rankings to Polygons**  
All SEI units were linked (using BEC site series or TEM ecosystem name) to corresponding ecosystems in the Conservation Framework (CF). B.C.'s approach for maintaining the biodiversity and conserving species and ecosystems. Ecosystems were scored under the CF goals of 'Proactive conservation' and 'Maintaining B.C.'s native biodiversity'. Final ranking was based on confirmation or reconciliation of the TEM rank, CF rank and expert consensus.

Where TEM and SEI data were not available, the conservation ranking was based on the attributes present in the VRI (leading tree species and age, biogeoclimatic variant and land cover code, cross-walked with similar TEM units). Riparian areas, wetlands and all grasslands received a conservation rank of very high to factor in the relative rarity and importance of these ecosystems in the province.

**Integration of Study Areas**  
The conservation rankings for the two study areas (North & Central Okanagan and South Okanagan-Similkameen) were combined to create an integrated perspective of the entire Okanagan Region. Natural variances in the distribution and amount of certain ecosystems produce some differences in the appearance between the two study areas. For example, grasslands (which are ranked as very high) are more abundant in the South Okanagan-Similkameen than the North and Central study area.

The original analyses for the two study areas were conducted independently, using SEI datasets that incorporated different information. The North and Central Okanagan SEI data included information regarding wildlife habitat and condition values that were not available for the South Okanagan-Similkameen. This additional information moderated the conservation rankings in the North and Central study area. As a result, there are differences in rankings, and consequently, variations in appearance between the two areas.

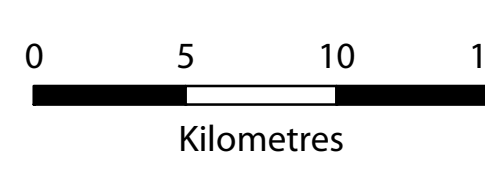
**Conservation Planning**  
The conservation ranking map provides a comprehensive look at the relative value of ecosystems in the Okanagan Region. Together with other maps in the series (relative biodiversity, habitat connectivity, and land management class), individuals and organizations can begin to make more informed decisions on conservation and land use planning, at a region-wide scale.

**Legend**

- Study Area
- Regional District Boundary
- River/Stream
- Lake/Major River
- SEI Boundary

**Conservation Ranking**

- Very high
- High
- Moderate
- Low



**Data sources:**  
Ministry of Forests and Range, Ministry of Environment, TRIM, Regional District of Central Okanagan, Regional District of North Okanagan, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, Grasslands Conservation Council of B.C., Makonis Consulting

Scale: 1:250,000!  
Projection: BC Albers NAD 83  
Written scales are approximate and are based on a 36 x 48 inch paper size.

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